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**TESTIMONY OF  
THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE ALLIANCE  
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
REGARDING**

**H.B. 6567 AN ACT CONCERNING READMISSION OF STUDENTS  
S.B. No. 830 AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS  
REGARDING EDUCATION (Sec. 17) delaying for two years the implementation of in-  
school suspension guidelines  
H.B. 5769 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DROPOUTS**

**MARCH 9, 2009**

This testimony is submitted by Lara Herscovitch, Senior Policy Associate at the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (Alliance). The Alliance is a statewide, non-profit organization that works to reduce the number of children and youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice system, and advocates a safe, effective and fair system for those involved.

The Alliance supports the intention of Bill No. 6567 concerning the readmission of students, but believes the language of the bill must be modified to meet this goal. The Alliance believes that legislation is necessary in order to prevent schools from expelling students who have already spent time out of the district for the same offense, i.e. they were in jail (16 & 17) or they were in DCF care (residential or CJTS) and are now coming home and trying to come back to school.

The language of section 2 of this bill, as currently written, would only apply to students who are over 16 and have been expelled before. Students who were eligible for an alternative education program could still be denied readmission. We have attached proposed substitute language here:

(NEW) (2) If the student who committed the expellable offence seeks to re-enter the district after being in an out of district placement as a result of the same offense, the district must allow the student to re-enroll and cannot move to expel the student for that offense.

Students simply cannot learn when they are not in school. We all know that individuals who finish high school are much more likely to become successful adults. When students face multiple barriers to school re-entry after an out of district placement they are likely to become discouraged and drop out of school entirely.

Regarding S.B. 830, the Alliance strongly opposes the Governor's proposal to delay implementation of the in-school suspension changes until 2011. There are many misunderstandings of this legislation, which was intended to prevent the inappropriate out-of-school suspensions.

*Myth:* Schools can never use out-of-school suspensions as part of their disciplinary procedure.

*Fact:* The law states that school's can out-of-school suspend if the pupil poses a danger to